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Alumna's Master's Thesis Project Leads to Creativity Award

SAN LUIS OBISPO – For her Cal Poly master's thesis project in 2009, Tricia Compas developed the "Polytech Waterbag," a portable, low-cost device to provide clean drinking water to disaster victims and displaced populations.

Her continuing work on the product has earned the civil and environmental engineering alumna the Creativity Foundation's 2011 Legacy Medal. She and five other recipients were presented the awards at a ceremony on April 9 at the Cosmos Club in Washington DC by anthropologist and educator Johnnetta Cole.

Creativity Foundation recognized Compas for "her exceptional creative promise as an inventor and entrepreneur."

As a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Tryg Lundquist, Compas led a multidisciplinary team of students in the design and testing of the Polytech Waterbag. Support to develop the technology came from two business incubation programs at Cal Poly: the Ray Scherr Business Plan Competition and Innovation Quest; and the National Collegiate Inventors and Innovators Alliance.

After graduating, Compas founded DayOne Response, Inc. to bring the Polytech Waterbag technology to market and to continue to develop other innovative disaster relief products. The company received a contract from the U.S. Navy to field test the Polytech Waterbag in Thailand; DayOne Response also plans to train communities in Haiti on the product's use and technology.

About the Legacy Prize:

The Legacy Prize dates back to 1793, when founding father Benjamin Franklin endowed the prize in his will. Silver medals have since been presented to outstanding scholars in the Boston Free Grammar Schools, where Franklin's own formal education ended at the age of 10. The Creativity Foundation expanded that tradition in 2004 to include youth from across the U.S. In collaboration with top educational institutions, the foundation identifies students who show exceptional creative promise. Legacy medal recipients are eligible to participate in mentoring and networking programs to nurture their creative abilities. For more information, go to: www.creativity-found.org.

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